

rebuttal does not clearly and convincingly refute the rebuttable determination of control or presumption of action in concert, and may determine to reject a submission solely on such bases.

(f) *Safe harbor.* Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, where an acquiror has no intention to participate in or to seek to exercise control over a savings association's management or policies, the acquiror may seek to qualify for a safe harbor with respect to its ownership of stock of a savings association.

(1) In order to qualify for the safe harbor, an acquiror must submit a certification to the OTS that shall be signed by the acquiror or an authorized representative thereof and shall read as follows:

The undersigned makes this submission pursuant to § 574.4(f) of the regulations of the Office of Thrift Supervision ("Office") with respect to [name of savings association] and hereby certifies to the Office the following:

The undersigned is not in control of [name of savings association] under § 574.4(a);

The undersigned is not subject to any control factor as enumerated in § 574.4(c) with respect to the [name of savings association];

The undersigned will not solicit proxies relating to the voting stock of [name of savings association];

Before any change in status occurs that would bring the undersigned within the scope of § 574.4 (a) or (b), the undersigned will file and obtain approval of a rebuttal, notice or application, as appropriate.

The undersigned has not acquired stock of [name of savings association] for the purpose or effect of changing or influencing the control of [name of savings association] or in connection with or as a participant in any transaction having such purpose or effect.

(2) An acquiror claiming safe-harbor status may vote freely and dissent with respect to its own stock. Certifications provided for in this paragraph must be filed with OTS in accordance with §§ 516.30 and 516.40 of this chapter.

[54 FR 49690, Nov. 30, 1989, as amended at 57 FR 14349, Apr. 20, 1992; 60 FR 66720, Dec. 26, 1995; 66 FR 13009, Mar. 2, 2001]

#### § 574.5 Certifications of ownership.

(a) *Acquisition of stock.* (1) Upon the acquisition of beneficial ownership that exceeds, in the aggregate, 10 percent of any class of stock of a savings association or additional stock above

10 percent of the stock of a savings association occurring after December 26, 1985, an acquiror shall file with the OTS a certification as described in this section.

(2) The certification filed pursuant to this section shall be signed by the acquiror or an authorized representative thereof and shall read as follows:

The undersigned is the beneficial owner of 10 percent or more of a class of stock of [name of savings association or holding company]. The undersigned is not in control of such association or company, as defined in 12 CFR 574.4(a), and is not subject to a rebuttable determination of control under § 574.4(b), and will take no action that would result in a determination of control or a rebuttable determination of control without first filing and obtaining approval of an application under the Savings and Loan Holding Company Act, 12 U.S.C. 1467a, or notice under the Change in Bank Control Act, 12 U.S.C. 1817(j), or filing and obtaining acceptance by the Office of Thrift Supervision of a rebuttal of the rebuttable determination of control.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in this paragraph (a), an acquiror is not required to file a certification if (i) the Office has approved the acquisition of the savings association or (ii) the acquiror has filed a materially complete application or notice pursuant to § 574.3 of this part.

(b) *Privacy.* All certifications filed under this § 574.5 shall be for the information of the Office in connection with its examination functions and shall be provided confidential treatment by the Office.

[54 FR 49690, Nov. 30, 1989, as amended at 57 FR 14349, Apr. 20, 1992; 59 FR 53571, Oct. 25, 1994]

#### § 574.6 Procedural requirements.

(a) *Form of application or notice.* An application, notice, or informational filing required by § 574.3 of this part shall be filed on the Application/Information Filing H-(e) \_\_\_\_\_ form. (As specified in the form's instructions, the blank line following the H-(e) should be filled in by applicants with the appropriate "1", "1-S", "2", "3", or "4" depending on the type of application.) The specific application requirements for each type of filing are indicated on the form. An acquiror may request confidential treatment of portions of an

application or notice only by complying with the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section. In the case of an application involving a merger (including a merger with an interim association) the Application/Information Filing H-(e) \_\_\_\_\_ form shall be used in lieu of an application that otherwise would be required for such merger under §§ 546.2, 552.13, and 563.22 of this chapter.

(1) *H-(e)1.* This application type shall be filed under § 574.3(a) of this part by a company, other than a savings and loan holding company, for approval to acquire direct or indirect control of one savings association.

(2) *H-(e)1-S.* This application type shall be filed under § 574.3(a) of this part by a savings association for approval to reorganize into a holding company structure, provided that the proposed transaction satisfies each of the conditions for automatic approval specified in § 574.7 (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this part.

(3) *H-(e)2.* (i) This application type shall be filed under § 574.3(a) of this part:

(A) By a savings and loan holding company for approval to acquire and hold separately one or more savings associations;

(B) By any other company for approval to acquire and hold separately more than one savings association;

(C) By a savings and loan holding company for approval of an acquisition of shares issued by a savings association in a qualified stock issuance pursuant to § 574.8 of this part; or

(D) By any director, officer, or any individual who owns, controls, or holds with power to vote (or holds proxies representing) more than 25 percent of the voting shares of a savings and loan holding company for approval of an acquisition of one or more savings associations.

(ii) The OTS may determine as a general matter or on a case-by-case basis not to require application information not relevant to transactions described in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) (C) and (D) of this section.

(4) *H-(e)3.* This application shall be used for all applications filed under § 574.3(a) of this part:

(i) By a savings and loan holding company for approval of acquisitions by a merger, consolidation, or purchase of assets of a savings association or uninsured institution or a savings and loan holding company; or

(ii) By any company for approval of acquisitions by a merger, consolidation, or purchase of assets of two or more savings associations.

(5) *H-(e)4.* This information filing shall be used to claim that a reorganization is exempt from prior written approval of the OTS under § 574.3(c)(1)(ii) of this part.

(6) *Notice Form 1393, parts A and B.* This form shall be used for all notices filed under § 574.3(b) of this part regarding the acquisition of control of a savings association by any person or persons not constituting a company except as provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(b) *Filing requirements—(1) Applications, notices, and rebuttals.* (i) Complete copies including exhibits and all other pertinent documents of applications, notices, and rebuttal submissions shall be filed with the Region in which the savings association or associations involved in the transaction have their home office or offices. Unsigned copies shall be conformed. Each copy shall include a summary of the proposed transaction.

(ii) Any person or company may amend an application, notice or rebuttal submission, or file additional information, upon request of the OTS or, in the case of the party filing an application, notice, or rebuttal, upon such party's own initiative.

(2) *H-(e)4 Information filing.* Any information filing required to be made to claim that a reorganization is exempt from prior written approval of the OTS under § 574.3(c)(1)(ii) of this part shall be clearly labeled “H-(e)4 Information Filing”.

(c) *Sufficiency and waiver.* (1) Except as provided in § 574.6(c)(5), an application or notice filed pursuant to § 574.3 (a) or (b) shall not be deemed sufficient unless it includes all of the information required by the form prescribed by the Office and this part, including a complete description of the acquiror's proposed plan for acquisition of control

whether pursuant to one or more transactions, and any additional relevant information as the Office may require by written request to the applicant. Unless an application or notice specifically indicates otherwise, the application or notice shall be considered to pertain to acquisition of 100 percent of a savings association's voting stock. Where an application or notice pertains to a lesser amount of stock, the Office may condition its approval or non-disapproval to apply only to such amount, in which case additional acquisitions may be made only by amendment to the acquiror's application or notice and the Office's approval or non-disapproval thereof. Failure by an applicant to respond completely to a written request by the Office for additional information within 30 calendar days of the date of such request may be deemed to constitute withdrawal of the application, notice, or rebuttal filing or may be treated as grounds for denial of an application, issuance of a notice of disapproval of a notice, or rejection of a rebuttal.

(2) The period for the Office's review of any proposed acquisition will commence upon receipt by the Office of a notice or application deemed sufficient under paragraph (c)(1) of this section. The Office shall notify an acquiror in writing within 30 calendar days after proper filing of an application or notice as to whether an application or notice—

- (i) Is sufficient;
- (ii) Is insufficient, and what additional information is requested in order to render the application or notice sufficient; or
- (iii) Is materially deficient and will not be processed. The Office shall also notify an acquiror in writing within 15 calendar days after proper filing of any additional information furnished in response to a specific request by the Office as to whether the application or notice is thereby deemed to be sufficient. If the Office fails to so notify an acquiror within such time, the application or notice shall be deemed to be sufficient as of the expiration of the applicable period.

(3) After additional information has been requested and supplied, the Office may request additional information

only with respect to matters derived from or prompted by information already furnished, or information of a material nature that was not reasonably available from the acquiror, was concealed, or pertains to developments subsequent to the time of the Office's initial request for additional information. With regard to information of a material nature that was not reasonably available from the acquiror or was concealed at the time an application or notice was deemed to be sufficient or which pertains to developments subsequent to the time an application or notice was deemed to be sufficient, the Office, at its option, may request such additional information as it considers necessary, or may deem the application or notice not to be sufficient until such additional information is furnished and cause the review period to commence again in its entirety upon receipt of such additional information.

(i) The 60-day period for the Office's review of an application or notice deemed to be sufficient also may be extended by the Office for up to an additional 30 days.

(ii) The period for the Office's review of a notice may be further extended not to exceed two additional times for not more than 45 days each time if—

(A) The Office determines that any acquiring party has not furnished all the information required under this part;

(B) In the Office's judgment, any material information submitted is substantially inaccurate;

(C) The Office has been unable to complete an investigation of each acquiror because of any delay caused by, or the inadequate cooperation of, such acquiror; or

(D) The Office determines that additional time is needed to investigate and determine that no acquiring party has a record of failing to comply with the requirements of subchapter II of chapter 53 of title 31 of the United States Code.

(4) With respect to an H-(e)4 information filing, the Chief Counsel or his or her designee shall have 30 days after receipt of a filing deemed sufficient to

disapprove the assertion that the company qualifies for the exemption provided in §574.3(c)(1)(ii). After the expiration of such 30-day period without response from the Chief Counsel, the filing shall be deemed to be approved.

(5) The Office may waive any requirements of this paragraph (c) determined to be unnecessary by the Office, upon its own initiative, upon the written request of an acquiring person, or in a supervisory case.

(d) *Public notice.* (1) The acquiror must publish a public notice of an application under §574.3(a) or §574.8 of this chapter or a notice under §574.3(b) of this chapter, in accordance with the procedures in subpart B of part 516 of this chapter. Promptly after publication, the acquiror must transmit copies of the public notice and the publisher's affidavit to OTS.

(2) The acquiror must provide a copy of the public notice to the savings association whose stock is sought to be acquired, and may provide a copy of the public notice to any other person who may have an interest in the application.

(3) OTS will notify the appropriate state supervisor and will notify persons whose requests for announcements, as described in 12 CFR part 563e, appendix B, have been received in time for the notification. OTS may also notify any other persons who may have an interest in the application or notice.

(e) *Submission of comments.* Commenters may submit comments on the application or notice in accordance with the procedures in subpart C of part 516 of this chapter.

(f) *Disclosure.* (1) Any application, notice, other filings, public comment, or portion thereof, made pursuant to this part for which confidential treatment is not requested in accordance with this paragraph (f), shall be immediately available to the public and not subject to the procedures set forth herein. Public disclosure shall be made of other portions of an application, notice, other filing or public comment in accordance with paragraph (f)(2) of this section, the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and parts 503 and 505 of this chapter. Applicants and other submitters should provide confidential and non-confidential

versions of their filings, as described in §574.6(f) (2) and (3) in order to facilitate this process.

(2) Any person who submits any information or causes or permits any information to be submitted to the Office pursuant to this part may request that the Office afford confidential treatment under the Freedom of Information Act to such information for reasons of personal privacy or business confidentiality, which shall include such information that would be deemed to result in the commencement of a tender offer under §240.14d-2 of title 17 of the Code of Federal Regulations, or for any other reason permitted by Federal law. Such request for confidentiality must be made and justified in accordance with paragraph (f)(5) of this section at the time of filing, and must, to the extent practicable, identify with specificity the information for which confidential treatment may be available and not merely indicate portions of documents or entire documents in which such information is contained. Failure to specifically identify information for which confidential treatment is requested, failure to specifically justify the bases upon which confidentiality is claimed in accordance with paragraph (f)(5) of this section, or overbroad and indiscriminate claims for confidential treatment, may be bases for denial of the request. In addition, the filing party should take all steps reasonably necessary to ensure, as nearly as practicable, that at the time the information is first received by the Office (i) it is supplied segregated from information for which confidential treatment is not being requested, (ii) it is appropriately marked as confidential, and (iii) it is accompanied by a written request for confidential treatment which identifies with specificity the information as to which confidential treatment is requested. Any such request must be substantiated in accordance with paragraph (f)(5) of this section.

(3) All documents which contain information for which a request for confidential treatment is made or the appropriate segregable portions thereof shall be marked by the person submitting the records with a prominent stamp, typed legend, or other suitable

form of notice on each page or segregable portion of each page, stating "Confidential Treatment Requested by [name]." If such marking is impracticable under the circumstances, a cover sheet prominently marked "Confidential Treatment Requested by [name]" should be securely attached to each group of records submitted for which confidential treatment is requested. Each of the records transmitted in this manner should be individually marked with an identifying number and code so that they are separately identifiable.

(4) A determination as to the validity of any request for confidential treatment may be made when a request for disclosure of the information under the Freedom of Information Act is received, or at any time prior thereto. If the Office receives a request for the information under the Freedom of Information Act, OTS will advise the filing party before it discloses material for which confidential treatment has been requested.

(5) Substantiation of a request for confidential treatment shall consist of a statement setting forth, to the extent appropriate or necessary for the determination of the request for confidential treatment, the following information regarding the request:

(i) The reasons, concisely stated and referring to specific exemptive provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, why the information should be withheld from access under the Freedom of Information Act;

(ii) The applicability of any specific statutory or regulatory provisions which govern or may govern the treatment of the information;

(iii) The existence and applicability of any prior determination by the Office, other Federal agencies, or a court, concerning confidential treatment of the information;

(iv) The adverse consequences to a business enterprise, financial or otherwise, that would result from disclosure of confidential commercial or financial information, including any adverse effect on the business' competitive position;

(v) The measures taken by the business to protect the confidentiality of the commercial or financial information in question and of similar information,

prior to, and after, its submission to the Office;

(vi) The ease or difficulty of a competitor's obtaining or compiling the commercial or financial information;

(vii) Whether commercial or financial information was voluntarily submitted to the Office, and, if so, whether and how disclosure of the information would tend to impede the availability of similar information to the Office;

(viii) The extent, if any, to which portions of the substantiation of the request for confidential treatment should be afforded confidential treatment;

(ix) The amount of time after the consummation of the proposed acquisition for which the information should remain confidential and a justification thereof;

(x) Such additional facts and such legal and other authorities as the requesting person may consider appropriate.

(6) Any person requesting access to an application, notice, other filing, or public comment made pursuant to this part for purposes of commenting on a pending submission may prominently label such request: "Request for Disclosure of Filing(s) Made Under part 574/ Priority Treatment Requested."

(g) *Supervisory cases.* The provisions of paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) of this section may be waived by the Office in connection with a transaction approved by the Office for supervisory reasons.

(h) *Notification of State supervisor.* Upon receiving a notice relating to an acquisition of control of a state-chartered savings association, the Office shall forward a copy of the notice to the appropriate state savings and loan association supervisory agency, and shall allow 30 days within which the views and recommendations of such state supervisory agency may be submitted. The Office shall give due consideration to the views and recommendations of such state agency in determining whether to disapprove any proposed acquisition. Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph (h), if the Office determines that it must act immediately upon any notice of a proposed acquisition in order to prevent the default of the association involved

in the proposed acquisition, the Office may dispense with the requirement of this paragraph (h) or, if a copy of the notice is forwarded to the state supervisory agency, the Office may request that the views and recommendations of such state supervisory agency be submitted immediately in any form or by any means acceptable to the Office.

(i) *Additional procedures for acquisitions involving mergers.* Acquisitions of control involving mergers (including mergers with an interim association) shall also be subject to the procedures set forth in § 563.22 of this chapter to the extent applicable, except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(j) *Additional procedures for acquisitions of recently converted savings associations.* Applications, notices and rebuttals involving acquisitions of the stock of a recently converted savings association under § 563b.3(i)(3) of this chapter shall also address the criteria for approval set forth at § 563b.3(i)(5) of this chapter.

[54 FR 49690, Nov. 30, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 13517, Apr. 11, 1990; 57 FR 14349, Apr. 20, 1992; 59 FR 28470, June 2, 1994; 60 FR 66720, Dec. 26, 1995; 61 FR 65179, Dec. 11, 1996; 66 FR 13009, Mar. 2, 2001; 69 FR 68250, Nov. 24, 2004]

#### § 574.7 Determination by the OTS.

(a) *Acquisition by a company.* (1) The Office shall approve an application by any company other than a savings and loan holding company to acquire control of one savings association unless it determines that the criteria set forth in paragraph (c) of this section are not met. Acquisitions involving mergers with an interim association shall also be subject to §§ 546.2, 552.13, and 563.22 of this chapter.

(2) Subject to compliance with the requirements of §§ 546.2, 552.13 and 563.22, as applicable, an application filed pursuant to § 574.6(a)(2) by a savings association solely for the purpose of obtaining approval for the creation of a savings and loan holding company by such savings association, and related applications for permission to organize an interim federal association, and for merger with such interim association, shall be deemed to be approved 45 calendar days after such applications are properly filed in accordance

with the procedures set forth herein, unless, prior to such date:

(i) The Office has requested additional information of the applicant in writing;

(ii) Notified the applicant that the application is materially deficient and will not be processed; or

(iii) Denied the application prior to that time; provided that to be eligible for approval under this paragraph (a)(2):

(A) The holding company shall not be capitalized initially in an amount exceeding the amount the savings association is permitted to pay in dividends to its holding company as of the date of the reorganization pursuant to applicable regulations or, in the absence thereof, pursuant to the then current policy guidelines issued by the OTS;

(B) The creation of the savings and loan holding company by the association is the sole transaction contained in the application, and there are no other transactions requiring Office approval incident to the creation of the holding company (other than the creation of an interim association that will disappear upon consummation of the reorganization and the merger of the savings association with such interim association to effect the reorganization), and the holding company is not also seeking any regulatory waivers, regulatory forbearances, or resolution of legal or supervisory issues;

(C) The board of directors and executive officers of the holding company are composed of persons who, at the time of acquisition, are executive officers and directors of the association;

(D) The acquisition raises no significant issues of law or policy under then current Office policy;

(E) Prior to consummation of the reorganization transaction, the holding company shall enter into any dividend limitation, regulatory capital maintenance, or prenuptial agreement required by Office regulations, or in the absence thereof, required pursuant to policy guidelines issued by the OTS;

(F) The holding company shall furnish the following information in accordance with the specified time frames: